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TO ASSIST THE INQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND SYMPATHIZE WITH ALL.

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## A GENTLEMAN-SAINT.

'BEAUTIES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.'

LOOKING over the catalogue, the other day, of Mr Cawthorn's excellent circulating library (which has the books it professes to have,—a rare virtue in such establishments) our curiosity was raised by a volume intitled 'Beauties of St. Francis de Sales.' We sent for it, and found we had started so delicious a saint, that we vowed we must make him known to our readers. He is a true god-send, a man of men, a real quintessence of Christian charity and shrewd sense withal (things not only far from incompatible, but thoroughly amalgamable); in short, a man as sensible as Dr Johnson, with all the piety and patience which the Doctor desired to have, all the lowliness and kind fellowship which it would have puzzled him to behold in a prelate, and all the delicacy and true breeding which would have transported him. Like Fenelon, he was a sort of angel of a gentleman, a species of phoenix which, we really must say, the French Church seems to have produced beyond any other. Not that we undervalue the Hookers and Jewels, and other primitive excellences of our own. Deeply do we love and venerate them. But we like to see a human being develop all the humanities of which he is capable, those of outward as well as inward elegance not excepted; not indeed in the inconsistent and foppish shape of a Sir Charles Granison (who comes hushing upon us with insinuations of equal perfection in dancing and the decalogue, with soft deprecations of our astonishment, and all sorts of equivocal wordly accomplishments, which the author has furnished him with, on purpose to keep his piety safe—swordsmanship, for one) but in whatsoever, being the true spirit of a gentleman, manifests itself outwardly in consequence, shaping the movements of the commonest and most superficial parts of life to the unaffected elegance of the spirit within, and at the same time refusing no fellowship with honesty of any sort, nor ostentatiously claiming it, but feeling and having it, because of its true, natural, honest heart's blood, and a tendency to relish all things in common with us, "passioned as we."

When a man exhibits this nature, as St Francis de Sales did, and exhibits it too in the shape of a mortified saint of the Romish Church, a lone lodger, a celibatory, entering into everybody else's wishes and feelings, but denying himself some of the most precious to a being so constituted, we feel proud for the sake of the capabilities of humanity—proud because we belong to a species which we are utterly unable to illustrate so in our own persons—proud, and happy, and hopeful that if one human being can do so much, nay all, by like opportunities, and a like loving breeding, may ultimately do, not indeed the same, but enough—enough for themselves, and enough for the like exalted natures, too, who have the luck to live in such times.

Even if such times are not to come, but are merely among the fancies or necessary activities of the human mind, then still we are grateful for the vision by the way, and, above all, for the exquisite real fellowship.

We need not deprecate any ill construction of our use of the term "gentleman saint." In some sort, we do confess, we use it with a delighted smile on our face, astonished to start such a phenomenon in high life; but while the conversational sense of the

word is included, we claim for it, as we have explained, the very largest and truest sense. One of our brave old English dramatists, brave because his humanity misgave him in nothing, dared to call the divinest of beings that have trod the earth—

"The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

Here is another (at far distance) of the same heraldry, his shield—

"heart-shaped, and vermeil dyed."

Fenelon was another, but not so active or persuasive as De Sales. St Vincent de Paul, if we mistake not, the founder of the Sisters of Charity, was a fourth. So, we believe, was St Thomas Aquinas. So, perhaps, was Jeremy Taylor, and certainly Berkeley—the latter, the more unquestionably of the two, because he was the more active in doing good, and manifestly did not care twopenny for honours and profits, compared with the chance of benefiting his fellow-creatures. At one time, for this purpose, he *petitioned* to give up his preferences! Swift has a pleasant passage in furtherance of this object, in which he tells the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, that Dr Berkeley will be miserable in case he is not allowed to give up some hundreds a year.

We will first give the 'General Biographical Dictionary' account of St Francis de Sales, and follow it with a notice of the book before us.

"St Francis de Sales was born at the Castle of Sales, in the diocese of Geneva, August 21, 1567. He descended from one of the most ancient and noble families of Savoy. Having taken a doctor of law's degree at Padua, he was first advocate at Chambery, then provost of the church of Geneva at Annecy. Claudio de Granier, his bishop, sent him as a missionary into the valleys of his diocese, to convert the Zuinglians and Calvinists, which he is said to have performed in great numbers, and his sermons were attended with wonderful success. The bishop of Geneva chose him afterwards for his coadjutor, but was obliged to use authority before he could be persuaded to accept the office. Religious affairs called him afterwards into France, where he was universally esteemed; and Cardinal du Perron said, 'There were no heretics whom he could not convince, but M. de Geneva must be employed to convert them.' Henry IV, being informed of his merit, made him considerable offers, in hopes of detaining him in France; but he chose rather to return to Savoy, where he arrived in 1602, and found Bishop Granier had died a few days before. St Francis then undertook the reformation of his diocese, where piety and virtue soon flourished through his zeal: he restored regularity in the monasteries, and instituted the order of the Visitation in 1610, which was confirmed by Paul V, 1618, and of which the Baroness de Chantal, whom he converted by his preaching at Dijon, was the foundress. He also established a congregation of hermits in Chablais, restored ecclesiastical discipline to its ancient vigour, and converted numerous *heretics* to the faith. At the latter end of 1618, St Francis was obliged to go again to Paris, with the Cardinal de Savoy, to conclude a

marriage between the Prince of Piedmont and Christina of France, second daughter of Henry IV. This princess, herself, chose de Sales for her chief almoner; but he would accept the place only on two conditions; one, that it should not preclude his residing in his diocese; the other, that whenever he did not execute his office, he should not receive the profits of it. These unusual terms the princess was obliged to consent to; and immediately, as if by way of investing him with his office, presented him with a very valuable diamond, saying, "On condition that you will keep it for my sake." To which he replied, "I promise to do so, madam, unless the poor stand in need of it." Returning to Annecy, he continued to visit the sick, relieve those in want, instruct the people, and discharge all the duties of a pious bishop, till 1622, when he died of an apoplexy at Lyons, December 28, aged fifty-six, leaving several religious works, collected in 2 vols. folio. The most known are, the 'Introduction to a Devout Life,' and 'Philo, or a treatise on the Love of God.' Marsoillier has written his life, (2 vols. 12mo,) which was translated into English by Mr Crathorne. He was canonized in 1665. (Moreri.—Dict. Hist.—Butler.)

The writers of this notice do not seem to have been aware, that Camus, Bishop of Bellay, the disciple and friend of St Francis, wrote a large account of him, "the Beauties" which the work before us professes to give the public. This English volume is itself a curiosity. It is printed at Barnet, and emanates most likely from some public-spirited enthusiast of the Roman Catholic persuasion, who has thought, not without reason, to sow a good seed in these strange opinion-conflicting, yet truth-desiring times, when a little *genuine* Christianity stands a chance of being well received, from whatever quarter it comes. A friend of ours, smitten with love of the book, has applied for a copy at Messrs Longman's, whose name is in the title page, but is told that they have not one left; so that if the Barnet press do not take Christian pity upon the curious, we know not what is to be done for them, apart from the following extracts; which, however, we take to be quite enough to set any handsome mind upon salutary reflections.

Camus, the Boswell of a saint, is himself a curiosity. He was a man of wit and a satirist, and so far (in the latter respect) not very well fitted for ultra Christian aspiration. But he was also an enthusiastic lover of goodness, and of his great scrupulous friend; whom he looked up to with all the congregated humilities of a younger age, a real self-knowledge, and an unaffected modesty. He was naturally as hasty in his temperament as St Francis was the reverse; and was always for getting on too fast, and being angry that others would not be Christian enough; and it is quite delightful to see with what sense and good-humour his teacher reproves him, and sets him in the right way; upon which the young bishop begins over-emulating the older one (for they were both prelates together), trying to imitate his staid manners and deliberate style of preaching; and then St Francis reproves him again, joking as well as reasoning, and showing how he was spoiling the style peculiar to himself (Camus), with no possibility of getting at the style of another man, —the result of his habits and particular turn of mind.

But let the reader see for himself what a nature this man had,—what wisdom with simplicity, what undeviating kindness, what shrewd worldly discernment with unworldly feelings, what capital Johnson-

ian good sense, and wit too, and illustration, sometimes as familiar as any table-talk could desire, at others, in the very depth of the heart of sentiment and poetical grace. Observe also what a proper saint he was for every-day, as well as for holidays, and how he could sit down at table and be an ordinary unaffected gentleman among gentlemen, and dine at less elegant tables at inns, and say a true honest word, with not a syllable of pretence in it, for your hard-working innkeeper, "publican," and, perhaps, "sinner," as he was.

"Beautiful are the ceremonies of the church!" said a Roman Catholic prelate, when a great wax-candle was brought before him, stuck full of pieces of gold (his perquisite). "Beautiful are the ceremonies of the church!" think we, also, though no Roman Catholic, when we hear the organ roll, and the choir-voices rising, and see the white wax-candles on the altar, and the dark glowing paintings, full of hopeful or sweet-suffering faces. But most truly beautiful, certainly, must they have been, when they had such a man as this St Francis de Sales ministering at the altar, and making those seraphical visions true, in the shape of an every-day human being. But, to our extracts:—

"In speaking of brotherly correction (says the good Bishop Camus), St Francis gave me a lesson which I have not forgotten. He repeated it often, the better to impress it on my memory. 'That sincerity,' said he, 'which is not charitable, proceeds from a charity which is not sincere.' A worthy saying, worthy of being deeply considered and faithfully remembered.

IT IS BETTER TO REMAIN SILENT THAN SPEAK THE TRUTH ILL-HUMOUREDLY, AND SO SPOIL AN EXCELLENT DISH BY COVERING IT WITH BAD SAUCE.

I asked St Francis, if there were no other way by which I might discern from what fountain reproaches flowed. He, whose heart was wrapped up in benevolence, replied, in the true spirit of the great apostle,—"When they are made with mildness—mildness is the sister of love, and inseparable from her. With this idea, St Paul says, She beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. God, who is charity, guides the meek with his counsel, and teaches his ways to the simple. His spirit is not in the hurricane, the foaming cataract, or the tempestuous winds; but in the soft breath of the gentle zephyr. Is mildness come? said the prophet; then are we corrected. I advise you to imitate the good Samaritan, who poured oil and wine into the wounds of the unhappy traveller. You know that in a good salad there should be more oil than vinegar or salt. Be always as mild as you can; a spoonful of honey attracts more flies than barrel of vinegar. If you must fall into any extreme, let it be on the side of gentleness. The human mind is so constructed, that it resists rigour, and yields to softness. A mild word quenches anger, as water quenches the rage of fire; and by benignity any soil may be rendered fruitful. Truth, uttered with courtesy, is heaping coals of fire on the head; or, rather, THROWING ROSES IN THE FACE. How can we resist a foe whose weapons are pearls and diamonds? Some fruits, like nuts, are by nature bitter, but rendered sweet by being candied with sugar; such is reproof, bitter till candied with meekness, and preserved with the fire of charity."

St Francis always discouraged professions of humility, if they were not very true and very sincere. "Such professions," he said, "are the very cream, the very essence of pride; the real humble man wishes to be, and not to appear so. Humility is timorous, and starts at her shadow; and so delicate, that if she hears her name pronounced, it endangers her existence. He who blames himself, takes a by-road to praise; and, like the rorer, turns his back to the place whither he desires to go. He would be irritated if what he said against himself were believed; but from a principle of pride he desires to appear humble."

I esteemed my friend (resumes excellent Camus) so highly, that all his actions appeared to me perfect. It came into my head that it would be a very good thing to copy his manner of preaching. Do not suppose that I attempted to equal him in the loftiness of

his ideas, in the depth of his arguments, in the strength of his reasonings, in the excellency of his judgment; the mildness of his expressions, the order and just connexion of his periods, or that incomparable sweetness which could soften the hardest heart; no, that was quite beyond my powers. I was like a fly, which, not being able to walk on the polished surface of a mirror, is contented to remain on the frame which surrounds it. I amused myself in copying his gesture, in conforming myself to his slow and quiet manner of pronouncing, and moving. My own manner was naturally the very reverse of all this, the metamorphosis was therefore so strange, that I was scarcely to be recognized. I was no longer myself. I contrived to spoil my own original manner, without acquiring the admirable one which I so idly copied.

St Francis heard of this, and one day took an opportunity of saying to me—"Speaking of sermons reminds me of a strange piece of news which has reached my ears. It is reported that you try, in preaching, to adopt the Bishop of Geneva's peculiarities." I warded off this reproof by saying "And do you think I have chosen a bad example? What is your opinion of the Bishop of Geneva's preaching?" "Ha!" said he, "this grave question attacks reputation. Why, he really does not preach badly; but the fact is, that you are accused of being so bad a mimic, that nothing is to be seen but an unsuccessful attempt, which spoils the Bishop of Bellay, without representing the Bishop of Geneva. So that you ought to do as a bad painter did; he wrote under his picture the name of the objects which they misrepresented." "Let them talk," said I, "and you will find that, by degrees, the apprentice will become master, and the copies be mistaken for originals." "Joking apart," rejoined my friend, "you do yourself an injury. Why demolish a well-built edifice to erect one in its stead in which no rules of nature or art are adhered to? and at your age if you once take a wrong bias it will be difficult to set you right again. If natures could be exchanged, gladly would I exchange with you. I do all I can to rouse myself to animation. I try to be less tedious, but the more haste I make the more impede my course. I have difficulty in finding words, and greater still in pronouncing them. I am as slow as a tortoise. I can neither raise emotion in myself nor in my auditors. All my labour to do so is inefficient. You advance with crowded sail, I make my way with rowing. You fly—I creep. You have more fire in one finger than I have in my whole body. Your readiness and promptitude are wonderful, your vivacity unequalled, and now people say you weigh each word, count every period, appear languid yourself, and weary your audience. You may well imagine how this well-timed reproof and commendation cured my folly. I returned immediately to my original manner.

The best fish are nourished in the *unpalatable waters* of the sea, and the best souls are improved by such opposition as does not extinguish charity.

I asked St Francis what disposition of mind was the best with which to meet death? He coolly replied, "A charitable disposition."

"Do not overrate the blessings which God gives to others, and then underrate or despise what are given to yourself. It is the property of a little mind to say, Our neighbour's harvest is always more plentiful than our own, and his flock more prosperous."

I complained of some great hardships which I had experienced; it was obvious that St Francis agreed in thinking that I had been ill-treated. Finding myself so well seconded, I was triumphant, and exaggerated the justice of my cause in a superfluity of words. To stop the torrent of complaint St Francis said, "Certainly they are wrong in treating you in this manner. It is beneath them to do so, especially to a man in your condition; but in the whole of the business I see only one thing to your disadvantage." "What is that?" "That you might have been wiser, and remained silent!" This answer came so immediately home to me, that I felt immediately silenced, and found it impossible to make any reply.

[The following was a strange bit of supererogation

in the lively Bishop of Bellay. His candour hardly excuses it. Yet it increases our interest in his friend.]

St Francis practised himself the lessons which he taught to others; and during fourteen years that I was under his direction, and made it my study to remark all his actions, and even his very gestures and words, I never observed in him the slightest affectation of singularity. I will confess one of my contrivances when he visited me in my own house, and remained, as his custom was, a week annually, I contrived to bore holes, by which I saw him when alone, engaged in study, prayer, or reading, meditating, dressing, sitting, walking, or writing, when usually persons are most off their guard; yet I could not trace any difference in attitude or manner: his behaviour was ever as sincere and undisguised as his heart. He had, when alone, the same dignified manners as when in society; when he prayed, you would have imagined that he saw himself surrounded by holy angels; motionless, and with a countenance of humble reverence. I never saw him indulge in any indolent attitude(!) neither crossing his legs, nor resting his head on his hand; at all times he presented the same aspect of mingled gravity and sweetness, which never failed to inspire love and respect. He used to say, that our manners should resemble water, best when clearest, most simple, and without taste. However, though he had no peculiarities of behaviour, it appeared so singular that he should have no singularities, that he struck me therefore as very singular.

"WILLINGLY, NOT BY CONSTRAINT."

This was my friend's favourite saying, and the secret of his government. He used to say that those who would force the human will, exercise a tyranny odious to God. He never could bear those haughty persons who would be obeyed, whether willingly or not, they cared not; "Those," he said, "who love to be feared, fear to be loved; they themselves are of all people the most abject; some fear them, but they fear everyone. In the royal galley of Divine Love there is no force—the rowers are all volunteers." On this principle he always moulded his commands into the softer form of intreaty. St Peter's words—"Feed the flock of God, not by constraint," he was very fond of. I complained of the resistance I met with in my parochial visits. "What a commanding spirit you have!" he replied; "you want to walk on the wings of the wind, and you let yourself be carried away with zeal. Like an *ignis-fatuo*, it leads to the edge of precipices. Do you seek to shackle the will of man, when God has seen fit to have it free?"

St Francis did not approve of the saying—"Never rely on a reconciled enemy." He rather preferred a contrary maxim; and said, "that a quarrel between friends, when made up, added a new tie to friendship; as experience shows, that the *calosity* formed round a broken bone makes it stronger than before. Those who are reconciled, often renew their friendship with increased warmth: the offender is on his guard against a relapse, and anxious to atone for past unkindness; and the offended glory in forgiving and forgetting the wrongs that have been done to them. Princes are doubly careful of reconquered towns, and preserve them with more care than those the enemy never gained."

St Francis had particular delight in contemplating a painting of the Penitent Magdalen at the foot of the Cross; and sometimes called it his manual, and his library. Seeing a copy of this picture at Bellay, "Oh," said he, "what a blessed and advantageous exchange the penitent Mary made; she pours tears on the feet of Christ, and from those feet blood streams to wash away all her sins." To this thought he added another—"How carefully we should cherish the *little virtues* which spring up at the foot of the cross, since they are sprinkled with the blood of the son of God."

"What virtues do you mean?" He replied, "humility, patience, meekness, benignity, bearing one another's burthen, condescension, softness of heart, cheerfulness, cordiality, compassion, forgiving injuries, simplicity, candour; all, in short, of that sort.

*They, like unobtrusive violets, love the shade; like them are sustained by dew; and though, like them, they make little show, they shed a sweet odour on all around.*

'To obey a ferocious, savage, ill-humoured, thankless master, is to draw clear water from a fountain streaming from the jaws of a brazen lion. As Samson says. It is to find food in the devourer. It is to see God only.' [This is beautiful; and that is a fine bit of poetry about the lion; strength and sweetness meet in it. He is speaking of a master whom it happens to be incumbent on us to obey.]

St Francis highly esteemed those persons who kept inns, and entertained travellers,\* provided they were civil and obliging, saying, that no condition in life, he thought, had greater means of serving God and man; for it is a continual exercise of benevolence and mercy, though, like a physician, the fee is paid. [How oddly the following sounds in a Protestant ear, said of a 'Saint Francis!']

One day, after dinner, my friend was *amusing us with his entertaining conversation*, and the subject of innkeepers being accidentally started, the different persons present very freely gave their opinions on the subject, and one among them declared the whole set to be rogues.

This did not please St Francis; but as it was *neither a fit time nor place for reproof*, nor was the sarcastic gentleman in a mood to receive it, he turned the discourse by telling the following anecdote:—

'A Spanish pilgrim, little burdened with money, arrived at an inn, where, after having served him very ill, they charged him so much for his bad fare, that he loudly exclaimed at the injustice. However, being the weaker one, he was forced to give way, and be satisfied. He left the inn in anger, and observing that it was facing another inn, and that in the intermediate space a cross had been erected, he soothed his rage by exclaiming, Truly this place is a second Calvary, where the Holy Cross is stationed between two thieves (meaning the two innkeepers). The host of the opposite hotel, without appearing to notice his displeasure, coolly asked what injury he had received from him, which he thus repaid with abuse? Hush, hush, said the pilgrim, my worthy friend, be not offended, you are the *good thief*; but what say you of your neighbour, who has flayed me alive? This civility,' pursued St Francis, 'soothed the pilgrim's wrath; but we should be careful not to stigmatise whole nations or trades, by terming them rogues, impudent, &c., for even if we have no individual in view, each individual of the nation or trade is a sufferer by the sarcasm, and cannot like to be so stigmatized.'

To this I must add, that St Francis so highly esteemed innkeepers, that, in travelling, he forbade his servants to dispute about their charges, and ordered them rather to pay than to expostulate; and when told that the bills were unreasonable, and that they asked more than they deserved, he would reply, 'What ought we to reckon in the account for their trouble, care, civility, and frequent disturbances at night? Certainly they cannot be too well paid.' This good-nature of my friend was so well known that the innkeepers were always anxious to present their bills to him rather than to his servants; or else to throw themselves on his liberality, well knowing that he would give more than they could have asked.

#### POORNES IN SPIRIT, AND SPIRIT IN POVERTY.

Of these we have two opposite examples in St Charles Borromeo and St Francis de Sales. St Charles was nephew to the Pope, and very wealthy; he had an income of more than 100,000 crowns besides his considerable patrimony; but, amidst this wealth, he was poor in spirit, he had neither tapestry, plate, nor magnificent furniture:—his table was so frugal, as to be almost austere, and he himself lived chiefly on bread, water, and vegetables. The coffers, which contained his treasures, were the hands of the poor; thus in splendour was he humble.

Our saint had a different spirit: he was *rich in his*

\* The reader is to bear in mind, that these were foreign inns, and in old times, when a tavern-keeper's life was not so easy as it is now.

*poverty; of his Bishopric little remained to him, and his patrimony he let his brothers enjoy.* But he never rejected tapestry, plate, nor fine furniture, especially what might adorn the altar, for he loved to *adorn the house of God.*

#### THOROUGH LOVE.

We cannot deny that love is, of all mild emotions, the mildest—the very sweetener of bitterness—yet we find it compared to death and the grave; the reason of which is, that nothing is so forcible as gentleness, and nothing so gentle and so amiable as firmness.

'There was a society of holy men,' said St Francis, 'who one day accosted me thus, — Oh, sir, what can we do this year? Last year we failed, and did penance thrice a week; what shall we do now? Must we not do something more, both to testify our gratitude for the blessings we have received during the last year, and also that we may make some progress in the work of God?'

'Very right,' I replied, 'that you should always be advancing; however, your progress will not be made by the methods you propose—of increasing your religious exercises—but by the improved heart and dispositions with which you afford them, trusting in God more and more, and watching yourselves more and more. Last year you fasted three days in each week; if you double the number of fasts this year, every day will be a day of abstinence, and the year following what will you do?—you will be obliged to make weeks of nine days long, or else to fast each day twice over.' [Here follows a strong, and apparently a dangerous meat; yet the essence of sweetness, and even of safety, is in it. But pray ever mark our bold and admirable, as well as amiable, saint.]

'I do not know,' said St Francis, 'how that poor virtue, prudence, has offended me, but I cannot cordially like it—I care for it by necessity, as being the salt and lamp of life. The beauty of simplicity charms me—I would give a hundred serpents for one dove.' Both together, they are useful, and scripture enjoins us to unite them; but, as in medical compounds, many drugs must be put together to form a salutary draught, so I would not place any reliance on an equal dose; for the serpent might devour the inoffensive dove. People say, that in a corrupt age like the present, prudence is absolutely requisite to prevent being deceived. *I do not blame this maxim*, but I believe it is more Christian to let ourselves be devoured, and our goods spoiled, knowing that a better and more lasting inheritance awaits us. A good Christian would rather be robbed than rob others—rather be murdered than murderer—martyred than tyrant;—in word, it is far better to be good and simple, than shrewd and mischievous.

'There is a strange inconsistency in the human mind, which leads men to scrutinize with severity the secrets of their fellow-creatures' souls, which it is impossible they should ever clearly discover; while they neglect to examine and probe into the springs of their own conduct, which, if they do not, they certainly ought to know. The first they are forbidden, and the second they are commanded to do.

'This reminds me of a woman remarkable for her waywardness, and constant disobedience to the orders of her husband. She was drowned in a river. On hearing of it, her husband desired that the river should be dragged, in search of the body; he bid his servants go against the current of the stream, observing, *We have no reason to suppose that she should have lost her spirit of contradiction.*'

St Francis gave an excellent rule, which is, that 'if an action may be considered in more lights than one, always to choose the most favourable.' If there is no apology to be found, soften the bad impression it makes, by reflecting that the intention might not have been equally blameable; remember that the temptation might have been greater than you are aware of. Throw the odium on ignorance, carelessness, or the infirmity of human nature, to diminish the scandal.'

True devotion consists in performing the duties of life. St Francis was in the habit of blaming an inconsistency very common in persons more than ordinarily devout, who frequently turn their attention to the attainment of *virtues of no use to them* in their own sphere of action, and neglect the more useful. This inconsistency he attributed to a distaste, which people often experience for the station in which Providence has placed them, and the duties they are obliged to perform. Great laxity of manner creeps into monasteries, when their inmates devote themselves to the practice of virtues fitted for secular life; and errors are not less likely to make their way into private families, who, from a mistaken and ill-judged zeal, introduce among themselves the austerities and religious exercises of their secluded brethren.

Some persons think they pronounce the highest eulogium in saying of a family who ought to perform the active charities of life, 'it is quite a monastery; they live in it like monks or nuns:' not reflecting that it is trying to find *figs on thorns, or grapes on brambles.*

Not that exercises of piety are not right and good, but then the time, the place, the persons, the situation; in short, all circumstances must be duly considered. Devotion misplaced ceases to be devotion: it resembles a fish out of water, or a tree in a soil not congenial to its nature.

He compared this error of judgment, so unreasonable and injudicious, to those lovers of luxury who feed on strawberries at Christmas, not contented with delicacies in their proper season. Such heated brains require the physician's discipline rather than the cool voice of sober reason.

#### AN ADMIRABLE RULE IN SELF-CORRECTION FOR MORBID OR VIOLENT CONSCiences.

Since the degree of affection which we are commanded by God to feel for our neighbours ought to be measured by the reasonable and Christian love which we bear towards ourselves; since charity, which is benign and patient, obliges us to correct our neighbours for their failings, with great gentleness; it does not appear right to alter that temper in correcting ourselves, or to recover from a fault, with feelings of bitter and intemperate displeasure.

#### SCALE OF VIRTUES.

1st. St Francis preferred the *virtues most frequently called into action—the commonest*; and to exercise which, opportunities are oftenest found.

2ndly. He did not judge of the greatness and supernatural excellence of a virtue by an external demonstration; forasmuch as what appears a mere trifle may proceed from an exalted sentiment of charity and great assisting grace; while, on the contrary, great show may exist where the love of God operates but slightly, though that is the criterion by which we may judge whether or not a good work becomes acceptable to God.

3rdly. He preferred the virtues of more general influence, rather than those more limited in their good effects (the love of God excepted). For example, he preferred prayer as the star which gives light to every other excellence; piety, which sanctifies all our actions to the glory of God; humility, from which we have a lowly opinion of ourselves and our actions; meekness, which yields to the will of others; and patience, which teaches us to suffer all things: rather than magnanimity, munificence, or liberality; because they *embrace fewer objects, and their influence is less generally felt on the heart and temper.*

4thly. He was often inclined to doubt the use of dazzling qualities, because by their brilliancy they gave an opening to vain glory, the bane of all intrinsic worth.

5thly. He blamed those who never set any value on virtues till they gained the sanction of fashion, (a very bad judge of such merchandise); thus preferring ostensible to spiritual benevolence; fasting, penances, corporeal austerities, to gentleness, modesty, and self-government, which are of infinitely more value.

6thly. He also reproved those who would not seek

to obtain any virtues which were unsuited to their inclinations, to the neglect of what their duties more particularly required, serving God as it pleased themselves, and not in the manner which he commands. So common is their error, that a great number of persons, some very devout, suffer themselves to fall into it.

WE MAY BE VERY REGULAR IN DEVOTION, AND VERY WICKED!

"Do not deceive yourself," said my friend; "it is not impossible to be very devout, and yet very wicked." "Very hypocritical," I replied, "and not sincerely pious." "No; I speak of *intentional* devotion." This enigma appearing to me inexplicable; I begged he would explain his meaning more clearly. "Devotion of self and of nature," he answered, "is only a morally acquired virtue, and not a heavenly one assisted by grace; otherwise it would be theological, which certainly it is not. It is a quality subordinate to what is termed religion; or, as some say, it is only one of its effects, or fruits, as religion is in itself subordinate to that one of the cardinal virtues called justice, or righteousness."

"You well know that all moral virtues, and also faith and hope, which are theological, may subsist with sin. They are then *without form or life*, being deprived of *charity*, which is their substance, their soul, and on which all their power depends."

I lamented bitterly to St Francis of the very hard treatment which I had received. "To any other person," he said, "I should apply the unction of consolation, but the consideration of your situation in life, and the sincerity of my affection for you, render any such expression of affection needless. Pity would inflame the wound you have received. *I shall, therefore, throw vinegar and salt upon it.* [Is not this affected cruelty, and truly flattering candour, admirable?]

"You said that it required amazing and well-tried patience to bear such an insult in silence."

"Certainly, yours cannot be of a very fine temperament, since you complain so loudly."

"But it is only in your friendly bosom, in the ear of your affection, that I pour out my sorrows. To whom should a child turn for compassion, but to a kind parent?"

"Oh, you babe! Is it fit, do you suppose, for one who occupies a lofty station in the church of Christ, to encourage himself in such childishness? When I was a child, said St Paul, I spake as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. *The imperfect articulation, so engaging in an infant, becomes an imperfection, if continued in riper years.* Do you wish to be fed with milk and pap, instead of solid food? Have you not teeth to masticate bread, **EVEN THE BITTER BREAD OF GRIEF?**"

"What! can you delight in bearing on your breast a golden cross, and then let your heart sink beneath the weight of slight affliction, and pour out bitter lamentations?"

[WE ARE APT TO GIVE THE NAME OF CALUMNY TO] UNPLEASANT BUT WHOLESMOKE TRUTHS.

"Have patience with *all things*, but *chiefly* have patience with *yourself*. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them;—*every day begin the task anew*. The best method of attaining to Christian perfection is to be aware that you have not yet reached it; but never to be weary of re-commencing. For, in the first place, *how can you patiently bear your brother's burden, if you will not bear your own?*

Secondly. How can you reprove anyone with gentleness, when you correct yourself with asperity?

Thirdly. Whosoever is overcome with a sense of his faults, will not be able to subdue them: correction, to answer a good end, must proceed from a tranquil and thoughtful mind. [He means a mind made tranquil by its own consciousness of good intention, and a mild consideration of what is best.]

Erasmus said, that when he considered the life and doctrines of Socrates, he was inclined to exclaim, "*Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis*" (Saint Socrates, pray for us); that is to put him in the saintly and Chris-

tian calendar. We do not live under a Catholic dispensation; but, certainly, while reading this book, we have been inclined to exclaim, "Would to God there were but one Christian church, and such men as Saint Francis de Sales were counted saints by everybody. Not to be imitated by them in bye-gone, ascetical customs, much less in opinions that must have perplexed such natures more than any others, but in the ever-living necessities of charity and good faith, and the hope that such a church may come. And it may, and we believe will; for utility itself will find it indispensable,—to say nothing of those indestructible faculties of man, that are necessary to render utility itself beautiful and useful. If earth is to be made smoother, most assuredly the sky cannot be left out of its consideration, nor will appear less lovely; and we never see an old quiet village church among the trees, under a calm heaven,—such as that for instance of Finchley or Hendon,—without feeling secure that such a time will arrive, with 'Beauties' such as those of St Francis de Sales preached in it, and congregations who have *really* discovered that "God is love."

SLIDING.

THERE'S much philosophy in skating, sliding, " And playing on the ice at what's called *Hockey*,—

Rare game. I like to see a blithe young jockey, Just out of school, o'er ponds triumphant riding;— He's more than paid, though he should get a hiding;

He never thinks of saying "What's o'clock, eh?"

But on he speeds, light-footed as a trochee

*In sede tertia* the verse dividing.

What though he sometimes tumbles?—tis all one; He makes the best of what were else but gloom, And chill, and hardship.—Reader, if your doom In after life with ills be overrun,

That early knowledge may you wise resume,— Make evils bend, and turn them into fun.

E. W.

ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

NO. LV.—SINGULAR OUTRAGE IN A DUEL.

If our 'Romance of Real Life' this week cannot be said to be equally "short and sweet," it may be allowed, like Sir Toby's challenge, to be "curst and brief." We take it from the 'Bubbles of the Brunnen,' the author of which has prefaced it with one of those characteristic remarks, which with an air of somewhat superfluous and morbid nicety of fine sense, end in generally giving us really good wholesome doctrine, and showing a great deal of humanity.

Some of our readers, who write to us *there-anent*, will suppose from the brevity of our Romance this time, that our materials are "drawing to a conclusion;" but we owe it to ourselves and our stores (such as they are) to state, that the case is quite the reverse; that we only put so short a story in the present number, from an anticipation that it will be overflowing with a press of other matter; and that of 'Romances of Real Life' we really see no end. There is really no end to them in life; why should there be in books?

Our author's account of the duel, in which a man stoops to take his nose off the ground, reminds us of the fantastic story in Ariosto, of the magician, who had the privilege of picking up his head again when any one cut it off, and whom we always fancy adjusting it by a tenure of the nose; just as a gentleman, with finger and thumb, elegantly adjusts his cocked-hat. (See Orlando Furioso. Canto 15. st. 65, &c.) Let us not mention the fine Italian poet, however, without doing justice to that wonderful spirit of verisimilitude, by which he renders his most fantastic stories delightful. The magician has a fatal lock of hair on his head, which if once cut off, puts an end to the resumability of the head. Astolfo, in the course of the fight with him, which takes place on horseback, contrives, after cutting off his head, to get possession of it, and keep it by dint of flight, the headless magician pelting after him in vain. The

knight, not knowing how to discover the lock, scalps the head at once, to save time; *its face suddenly turns pale*, as the scalping passes the fatal point; and Astolfo, looking behind him, sees the pursuing trunk fall to the ground. This is the way in which great poets write what some people think foolish things. The foolish things have finer things in them than such critics would ever dream of.

"It is seldom or never (says our bather at the Brunnen) that I pay the slightest attention to dinner conversation, the dishes, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, being, in my opinion, so very much better: however, much against my will, I overheard some people talking of a duel, which I will mention, hoping it may tend to show by what disgusting, fiend-like sentiments this practice can be disgraced.

A couple of Germans, having quarrelled about some beautiful lady, met with sabres in their hands to fight a duel. The ugly one, who was of course the most violent of the two, after many attempts to deprive his hated adversary of his life, at last aimed a desperate blow at his head, which, though it missed its object, yet fell upon, and actually cut off, the good-looking man's nose. It had scarcely reached the ground, when its owner feeling that his beauty was gone, instantly threw away his sword, and, with both arms extended, eagerly bent forwards with the intention to pick up his own property and replace it; but the ugly German no sooner observed the intention, than, darting forwards, with the malice of the devil himself, he jumped upon the nose, and, before its master's face, crushed it and ground it to atoms!"

HINTS FOR TABLE TALK.

No. V.

SHAKING HANDS — CHIROLOGY — THE FRIENDLY SHAKE — THE SHAKE CEREMONIAL — THE SHAKE BOISTEROUS — THE SAILOR'S SQUEEZE — THE SHAKE THEATRICAL — THE ELECTIONEERING SHAKE — THE LOVER'S MANUAL EMBRACE — DIVERS PARTICULARS CONNECTED WITH THE SUBJECT — AN APOLOGY.

As this is our first meeting in the year 1835, I must be excused for the lateness of my compliments, but "better late than never," so "Good New Year to you, Mr Editor! Good New Year to you, gentle Reader!" Now imagine that we have shaken hands in token of mutual good will—forgiveness of whatsoever wrong may have passed, and of forbearance and hope for the future.

Shaking hands is, I think, without exception, one of the most expressive of our social customs. In grasping the hand of your friend, how every finger clasps its fellow—grows warm in the embrace, and seems loth to be parted. The action is strictly mutual—both hands assume exactly the same form; the one has not a firmer hold than the other—but they are twined like a weaver's knot.

There are several distinguishing characteristics of a real, good, hearty, friendly shake of the hand, which distinguish it from the mere matter-of-form, lukewarm apologies for the symbol of friendship. Indeed a very little examination will show that a shake of the hand comes so directly from the heart, that the feelings of one party towards another may be judged by it with a tolerable degree of correctness. Let us then examine into the several characters of hand shakings, and see whether there be not materials for a new theory, perhaps as plausible as Craniology or Physiology, and which we may call *Chirology*. I have some hopes that it will not be the lowest on the poll as a candidate for a near connection with *Phrenology*.

To commence, then, let us take first—The shake of true friendship. Suppose a sudden and unexpected recognition of a couple of young men, between whom friendship has grown insensibly and gradually, and is therefore the more sincere. They have been playfellows—schoolfellows, and the events of life having separated them for a time, they now meet. They are just at the age when the heart is warmest;—they have seen enough of the selfishness of the world to make amity

valuable, but yet not sufficient to sear their hearts against it. Observe! Simultaneous with the glow of pleasure which suffuses their faces upon recognition, is the raising and extending the hand. They seem to say each one to the other—

"Here's a hand my trusty frier,  
An' gi'es a hand o' thine!"

They approach—the hands are locked in the grip of concord, and joy produces, almost involuntarily, a hearty shake. The hands seem loth to part, as loth as the hearts of which they are the representatives. The grasp is gradually loosened; the hands slowly slip out of each other, and, arriving at the tip of the finger, the one lingers a moment ere it lets the other drop. But you will observe that this hearty shake was not such as would be apt to dislocate your shoulder, nor the grasp like the bite of a vice, that forces the blood to, and almost out of, the fingers' ends; true friendship is incapable of giving pain; such an idea would be as absurd as to measure the extent of a man's amity by the number of injuries he had done you.

Secondly, let us consider.—The shake ceremonial. By this I mean such a shake as one often would give and receive after the satisfactory arrangement of some business, or after a first introduction to a man whose new acquaintanceship had not excited any interest in you, and with whom you part careless whether you should ever meet again or no; or such as you would bestow upon one who pesters you with professions of friendship which you know to be insincere, but whose proffered hand you cannot in common politeness refuse; or such as you would give a distant relation whom you only know by sight; or at meeting and parting with a fellow club member (either clubs of the West-End, or otherwise); or such as on visiting an old Anti-Malthusian you are obliged to give his spouse, and five grown-up daughters, and four grown-up sons; and indeed in a hundred other instances which it would be tedious to name. It is almost a misnomer to call this shake a *shake*: it merely consists in one party taking the other's hand,—raising it about an inch, or inch and a half,—lowering it again, and then separating; oft-times not even so much as that—merely making a pretence to join hands, and 'tis done with. I have never read Chesterfield, but I should think, from the idea I have of him, that he prohibits shaking hands, except between intimate friends, as too great a freedom with one with whom you are a stranger, and as too great a condescension on your part to one who is almost a stranger to you. As an enemy to all mockery, deceit, or pretence, I must give it as my opinion that only friends should shake hands; such is my practice; a bow of recognition and at parting is my custom with casual acquaintances; but, of course, I never refuse a proffered hand. ¶

Thirdly.—The shake boisterous; a shake which puts you in danger of a dislocated shoulder, and which makes your hand tingle for the next hour or two. These are the shakes of your riotous Toms, Dicks, and Harrys—your college chums, whose delight is in mischief, and whose element is a row. These fellows, after having put you to worse torture than the thumb-screw, if you chance to wince bit, or make a wry face, exclaim in a most consolatory tone of affected surprise, "What, my dear fellow, have I hurt you? Beg 'pardon'—'twas the warmth of my friendship for you, you know!" Hang such friendship! say I; if you cannot express your friendship in a more friendly way, I had rather be without it; at least without such like proofs of it. As the Dustman said to the Coalheaver who slapped him on the back with a "How are ye, my hearty?"—"If you consider yourself a gemman, behave as sich!" so would I say to Tom, "If you call yourself a friend, act as such." But Tom only does it for "a lark," and that he may amuse himself by looking at you trying to keep a placid countenance whilst he is torturing you. Tom's father thinks him a sad fellow, but says he has a good heart at bottom, and will be steady when he gets older. His trick at

hand-shaking is one he brags of, and I have seen him with a kindred spirit, grasping hands, and trying who could bear the most pain, and who would flinch under the torture first. He, however, sometimes "catches a tartar," and then deservedly gets his knuckles well rubbed for his pains.

This squeezing of hands is, I believe, particularly a sailor's trick; and with them may perhaps be somewhat excusable, as well as many other customs not tolerated in civilized society. They mayhap think they are grasping a marlin-spike; or else want to prove to you how tight they can hand a rope, and their cornuted palms give you forcible evidence of their power. Young Middeys are generally initiated in this practice, by the boatswain, perhaps, or his own compeers, and on his first visit home, on leave of absence, gives his brothers and sisters proofs of his prowess, and laughs heartily when they cry out, "Oh!" at the same time admonishing them to cry out before they are hurt, not afterwards, as it is then useless, and a waste of breath.

Fourthly.—The shake-theatrical. The manual salute which is practised on the stage, I never saw anywhere else; it is not to be met with in any other scene of the stage of the world than the Thespian. One fellow takes the right hand of another, and embeds it in his own left hand; he then looks at it—holds it out from him for a second—raises his right hand, and brings it down again like a sledge hammer on an anvil, and with a slap that resounds like the smack of a drayman's whip,—an energetic shake follows. This somewhat smacks of the pedagogue's saws, and *palmar qui meruit ferat*. This is one of the points in which the gentry of the sock and buskin do not copy nature.

While we are upon shakes that want sincerity—that lack of heartiness, we will consider—The electioneering shake. This is a compound of several characters of shakes; it partakes of the shake descending, the shake obsequious, the shake friendly, and the boisterous shake. The skilful tactician tempers his shake of hand as well as his language, to the person with whom he has to deal; but any one, with a moderate share of penetration, at once perceives its want of heart, and the total absence of all life from the salutation. The soft, small, tapering-fingered aristocratic hand of the right honourable candidate is buried and almost annihilated in the horn-hard hand of the labourer or artisan; and were it not impelled by interest, would shrink from the touch. The honest elector too, is not altogether proof against the flattery and condescension of the great man, and retains a firmer and a longer hold, and gives a heartier shake on his part, than is altogether palatable to the gentleman who is now the beggar, whose present part to play is the solicitation of a favour. The voter afterwards seems to have a greater respect for his honoured right hand than for its more neglected neighbour; he takes greater care of it; guarding it from injury in his breeches pocket. He holds his head also some few inches higher; speaks to his wife and children in a somewhat more imperious tone for the next half hour. It is sometime, perhaps two or three hours before he can make up his mind to dispel the odour of gentility upon his hand by touching a saw, or a shovel, or a pick-axe, or a loom; and there is a moment's hesitation in grasping the proffered hand of his favourite shopmate upon their next meeting. All these whims, however, are dispelled by the time his vote is registered, and the "Electioneering shake," is remembered by the elector, only when politics are discussed at the club; and by the elected totally forgotten, till the king sends the M.P. to pay another visit to his constituents.

I come now to the consideration of a more agreeable branch of the subject—The lover's shake. Love is the quintessence of friendship; as 'then it is a pleasure to grasp the hand of a friend in true amity, the delight of the lover's manual embrace must be proportionally fraught with joy. It is a misnomer to call it the "lover's shake;" I have more correctly

denominated it a "manual embrace." The pleasure is too delightful to part with it so transiently as a *shake* of the hand implies. When lovers meet alone, their hands are locked together from the moment of meeting to the time of parting. They wander in some shady grove, or by some murmuring stream "hand in hand." Milton beautifully, but simply, describes our first parents,—

"So hand in hand they passed—the loveliest pair."

Then, when, after sweet communings, lovers are obliged to part, though but for a time, what a world of affection is evinced in his warm earnest pressure of her hand, and her more gentle, but not less loving return! But I must curb my flowing quill, which is just in a humour to grow eloquent upon the subject. The bounds of propriety must not be overstepped in the length of these heterogeneous observations; a rhapsody on love would be more fitting to commence than to close an article.

A great deal more might be said upon joining hands; the antiquity of the custom; "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished," which takes it back to Bible times; the question also, whether it is preferable to the French custom of kissing? the joining hands at the nuptial ceremony, the blood coming from the heart to the ring finger; the symbol of union among bands of banditti or patriots, the "Hand in Hand Insurance;" and a host of other relative matter, not forgetting the hand of the *Indicator*, (which, by the bye, only offers you one finger to shake.)\* As this does not pretend to be a regular dissertation, I shall take the liberty of leaving all that might be said upon these branches of the subject, unsaid, at least for the present.

\* But, says the reader, you have not yet applied all these premises to the proposed system of "Chirology." Gentle reader, oblige me by doing so yourself, each in the manner that may best suit his fancy. Or, inclination permitting, I will perhaps do so on some future occasion.

I have a word to say before I, for a time, lay down my pen. Do not accuse me of presumption or inconsistency in shaking hands with you and the Editor at the commencement of the article, while, at the same time, I say that only intimate friends should thus salute. Remember it was only an *imaginary shake*—a *shake* through faith; believing, as I do, that your hearts feel some regard, some small portion of friendship (provided you are not *critics*), for your humble servant, a

BOOKWORM.

\* No symbol, we beg leave to say, of the *Indicator's* practice. As this "Index" has been alluded to by our Correspondent, and, from its frequent appearance before the public in connection with the writer, has become identified with him in the minds of some readers, we take this opportunity of stating, in reference to questions which have been put accordingly, that we write for no periodical at present, but the *LONDON JOURNAL*, nor, with the exception of a forthcoming article in the "New Monthly," have written for any, ever since it was set up.—ED.

#### THE WHOLE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH.

The body is to be preserved in a state of health two ways; by moderate diet and seasonable exercise; for the nature of sublunary things is so gliding, that if we continually repair not what time consumes, by little and little, they waste to nothing; and yet so as the excess render it not drowsy, and indisposed to contemplation; nor the too slender diet weak and languishing; that neither luxury soften it, nor negligence pollute it. Exercise follows nourishment, though they seem to follow and wheel about one another; for we exercise and eat; eat and exercise; the one to prepare us for meat, the other to awake nature, and keep the body's part in motion; and we should so use them, that the body may be the better; and the mind never the worse.—*Du Vaix.*

## THE WEEK.

## BIRTH-DAYS.

February 8, 1612. At Strensham, in Worcester-shire, the son of a farmer, Samuel Butler, the most learned and witty of satirical poets, the banterer of the Puritans. Charles the Second used to carry Hudibras about in his pocket, yet had not the spirit to do anything for its author, who lived poor and died so, rich only in a mind teeming with thought and imagery. He had a friend, however, who stood by him in life and death, and who decently buried him: "When poor selfish Charles died, pieces of his remains (cut from the embalming) were found floating about in kitchen sinks."

— 9, 1700. Daniel Bernouilli, professor of medicine and natural philosophy at Basil, a celebrated mathematician, like his father. His reputation may be estimated by the following anecdote. He fell in, during a journey, with a fellow-traveller, who, being struck with his conversation, asked his name. "I am Daniel Bernouilli," answered he with simplicity. "And I," replied the other, thinking to keep up the joke, "am Sir Isaac Newton."

— 10, 1670. At Bardsey Grange, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, of an ancient family, William Congreve, the wittiest of English dramatists. The Duchess of Marlborough (heiress of the Duke) was so fond of his company, that not being able to endure the sight of his empty chair at table, she had an image made of him in wax, and used to drink to it as if he were alive. This looks well for him; and yet there is an apparent heartlessness in his plays, which makes us unwilling to repeat in other words what we have said of his genius in the "Supplement" to this Journal, No. 3, Chapter the Fourth.

Same day, 1706. In Broad street, near the Bank, (where his father, afterwards the celebrated Bishop, was rector of St Peter Le Poor) Benjamin Hoadly, author of the comedy of the "Suspicious Husband." He was an eminent physician, and a good-natured, benevolent man. His play has been thought as profligate as those of Congreve; but there is an animal spirit in it, and a native under-current of good feeling, very different from the sophistication of Congreve's fine ladies and gentlemen. Congreve writes like a rake upon system; Hoadly, like a wild light-hearted youth from school.

## CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS.

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.

NO. IV.—HAMLET.

This is that Hamlet the Dane, whom we read of in our youth, and whom we seem almost to remember in our after-years; he who made that famous soliloquy on life, who gave the advice to the players, who thought "this goodly frame, the earth, a sterl promontory, and this brave o'er-hanging firmament, the air, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire, a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours;" whom "man delighted not, nor woman neither;" he who talked with the grave-diggers, and moralized on Yorick's skull; the school-fellow of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at Wittenberg; the friend of Horatio; the lover of Ophelia; he that was mad and sent to England; the slow avenger of his father's death; who lived at the court of Horwendillus five hundred years before we were born, but all whose thoughts we seem to know as well as we do our own, because we have read them in Shakspeare.

Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself "too much i' th' sun;" whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before

him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes;" he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady, who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play as his best resource to shoo off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock-representation of them—this is the true Hamlet.

We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticise it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakspeare's plays that we think of oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moraliser; and what makes him worth attending to is, that he moralises on his own feelings and experience. He is not a common-place pedant. If 'Lear' shows the greatest depth of passion, 'Hamlet' is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakspeare had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: everything is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort, the incidents succeed each other as matters of course, the characters think and speak and act just as they might do, if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark, at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a by-stander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and seen something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only "the outward pageants and the signs of grief;" but "we have that within which passes show." We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature: but Shakspeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. This is a very great advantage.

The character of Hamlet is itself a pure effusion of genius. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be: but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect, and in the scene where he kills Polonius, and again, where he alters the letters which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are taking with them to England, purporting his death. At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided, and sceptical, dallies with his purposes, till the occasion is lost, and always finds some pretence to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. For this reason he refuses to kill the King when he is at his prayers, and by a refinement in malice, which is in truth only an excuse for his

own want of resolution, defers his revenge to some more fatal opportunity, when he shall be engaged in some act "that has no relish of salvation in it."

"He kneels and prays,

And now I'll do, and so he goes to heaven,  
And so am I reveng'd: *that would be scan'd.*  
He kill'd my father, and for that  
I, his sole son, send him to heaven.  
Why this is reward, not revenge.  
Up sword, and know thou a more horrid time,  
When he is drunk, asleep, or in a rage."

He is the prince of philosophical speculations, and, because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, he misses it altogether. So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the Ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Yet he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it.

"How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast; no more.  
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To rust in us unus'd: now whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—  
A thought which quarter'd, hath but one part  
wisdom,

And ever three parts coward:—I do not know.  
Why yet I live to say, this thing's to do;  
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means  
To do it. Examples gross as earth excite me:  
Witness this army of such mass and charge,  
Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,  
Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. 'Tis not to be great,  
Never to stir without great argument;  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,  
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
That for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!"

Still he does nothing; and this very speculation on his own infirmity only affords him another occasion for indulging it. It is not for any want of attachment to his father or abhorrence of his murder that Hamlet is thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. His ruling passion is to think, not to act: and any vague pretence that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes.

The moral perfection of this character has been called in question, we think, by those who did not understand it. It is more interesting than according to rules: amiable though not faultless. The ethical delineations of "that noble and liberal casuist" (as Shakspeare has been well called) do not exhibit the drab-coloured quakerism of morality. His plays are not copied either from 'The Whole Duty of Man,' or from 'The Academy of Compliments!' We confess, we are a little shocked at the want of refinement in those who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The want of punctilious exactness in his behaviour either partakes of the "license of the time," or else belongs to the

very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much taken up with the airy world of contemplation to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time. His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him! Amidst the natural and preternatural horrors of his situation, he might be excused in delicacy from carrying on a regular courtship. When "his father's spirit was in arms," it was not a time for the son to make love in. He could neither marry Ophelia, nor wound her mind by explaining the cause of his alienation, which he durst hardly trust himself to think of. It would have taken him years to have come to a direct explanation on the point. In the harassed state of his mind, he could not have done otherwise than he did. His conduct does not contradict what he says when he sees her funeral,—

"I loved Ophelia! forty thousand brothers  
Could not with all their quantity of love  
Make up my sum."

Nothing can be more affecting or beautiful than the Queen's apostrophe to Ophelia on throwing flowers into the grave,—

"Sweets to the sweet, farewell."

I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife :  
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave."

Shakspeare was thoroughly a master of the mixed motives of human character, and he here shows us the Queen, who was so criminal in some respects, not without sensibility and affection in other relations of life. Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. Oh rose of May! oh flower too soon faded! Her love, her madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakspeare could have drawn in the way that he has done, and to the conception of which there is not even the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads. Her brother, Laertes, is a character we do not like so well: he is too hot and choleric, and somewhat rodomontade. Polonius is a perfect character in its kind; nor is there any foundation for the objections which have been made to the consistency of this part. It is said that he acts very foolishly and talks very sensibly. There is no inconsistency in that. Again, that he talks wisely at one time and foolishly at another; that his advice to Laertes is very sensible, and his advice to the King and Queen on the subject of Hamlet's madness very ridiculous. But he gives the one as a father, and is sincere in it; he gives the other as a mere courtier, a busy-body, and is accordingly officious, garrulous, and impertinent. In short, Shakspeare has been accused of inconsistency in this and other characters, only because he has kept up the distinction which there is in nature, between the understandings and the moral habits of men, between the absurdity of their ideas and the absurdity of their motives. Polonius is not a fool, but he makes himself so. His folly, whether in his actions or speeches, comes under the head of impropriety of intention.

We do not like to see our author's plays acted, and least of all, 'Hamlet.' There is no play that suffers so much in being transferred to the stage. Hamlet himself seems hardly capable of being acted. Mr Kemble unavoidably fails in this character from a want of ease and variety. The character of Hamlet is made up of undulating lines; it has the yielding flexibility of "a wave o' th' sea." Mr Kemble plays it like a man in armour, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating straight line, which is as remote from the natural grace and

refined susceptibility of the character, as the sharp angles and abrupt starts which Mr Kean introduces into the part. Mr Kean's Hamlet is as much too spleenetic and rash as Mr Kemble's is too deliberate and formal. His manner is too strong and pointed. He throws a severity, approaching to virulence, into the common observations and answers. There is nothing of this in Hamlet. He is, as it were, wrapped up in his reflections, and only *thinks aloud*. There should, therefore, be no attempt to impress what he says upon others by a studied exaggeration of emphasis or manner; no *talking at his hearers*. There should be as much of the gentleman and scholar as possible infused into the part, and as little of the actor. A pensive air of sadness should sit reluctantly upon his brow, but no appearance of fixed and sullen gloom. He is full of weakness and melancholy, but there is no harshness in his nature. He is the most amiable of misanthropes.

and the only one that men are not disposed to controvert. In the performance of this alone do they effectually aid one another.

ESSEX. Spenser! I wish I had at hand any argument or persuasions of force sufficient to remove thy sorrow: but really I am not in the habit of seeing men grieve at anything, except the loss of favour at court, or of a hawk, or of buck-hound. *And were I to wear out my condolence to a man of thy discernment in the same round, roll-call phrases we employ with one another upon these occasions, I should be guilty, not of insincerity, but of insolence.* True grief hath ever something sacred in it; and when it visiteth a wise man and a brave one, is most holy. Nay, kiss not my hand; he whom God visiteth, hath God with him. In his presence what am I?

SPENSER. Never so great, my lord, as at this hour, when you see aright who is greater. May He aid your counsels, and preserve your life and glory.

ESSEX. Where are thy friends? are they with thee?

SPENSER. Ah, where, indeed! Generous, true-hearted Philip, where art thou! whose presence was unto me peace and safety, whose smile was contentment, and whose praise renown. My lord, I cannot but think of him among still heavier losses: he was my earliest friend, and would have taught me wisdom.

ESSEX. Pastoral poetry, my dear Spenser, doth not require tears and lamentations. Dry thine eyes; rebuild thine house: the queen and council, I venture to promise thee, will make ample amends for every evil thou hast sustained. What! does that inforce thee to wail still louder?

SPENSER. Pardon me, bear with me, most noble heart! I have lost what no council, no queen, no Essex can restore.

ESSEX. We will see that! There are other swords, and other arms to wield them, besides a Leicester's and a Raleigh's. Others can crush their enemies, and serve their friends.

SPENSER. O my sweet child! and of many so powerful, many so wise and so beneficent, was there none to save thee? None! none!

ESSEX. I now perceive that thou now lamentest what almost every father is destined to lament. Happiness must be bought, although the payment must be delayed. Consider the same calamity might have befallen thee here in London. Neither the houses of ambassadors, nor the palaces of kings, nor the altars of God himself, are asylums against death. How do I know but under this very roof there may sleep some latent calamity, that in an instant shall cover with gloom every inmate of the house, and every dependant?

SPENSER. God avert it!

ESSEX. Every day, every hour of the year, do hundreds mourn what thou mournest.

SPENSER. Oh no, no, no! Calamities there are around us; calamities there are all over the earth; calamities there are in all seasons; but none in any season, none in any place, like mine.

ESSEX. So say all fathers; so say all husbands. *Look at any old mansion-house, and let the sun shine as gloriously as it may on the golden vanes, on the arms recently quartered over the gateway, on the embayed window, and on the happy pair that happily are toying at it; nevertheless, thou mayest say, that of a certainty the same fabric hath seen much sorrow within its chambers, and heard many wailings: and each time this was the heaviest stroke of all.* Funerals have passed along through the stout-hearted knights upon the wainscot, and amidst the laughing nymphs upon the arras. Old servants have shaken their heads, as if somebody had deceived them, when they found that beauty and nobility could perish. Edmund! the things that are too true, pass by us as if they were not true at all; and when they have singled us out, then only do they strike us. Thou and I must go too. Perhaps the next year may blow us away with its fallen leaves.\*

SPENSER. For you, my lord, many years (I trust) are waiting: I never shall see those fallen leaves.

\* It happened so.

No leaf, no bud will spring upon the earth before I sink into her breast for ever.

ESSEX. Thou, who art wiser than most men, should bear with patience, equanimity, and courage, what is common to all.

SPENSER. Enough! enough! enough! Have all men seen their infants burnt to ashes before their eyes?

ESSEX. Gracious God! Merciful Father! what is this?

SPENSER. Burnt alive! burnt to ashes! burnt to ashes! *The flames dart their serpent tongues through the nursery window; I cannot quit thee, my Elizabeth! I cannot lay down our Edmund. Oh these flames! they persecute, they kiss upon my brain, they taunt me with their fierce, foul voices, they carp at me, they wither me, they consume me, throwing back to me a little of life, to roll and suffer in, with their fangs upon me.*—Ask me, my lord, the things you wish to know from me—I may answer them—I am now composed again. Command me, my gracious lord! I would yet serve you—soor I shall be unable. You have stooped to raise me up; you have borne with me; you have pitied me, even like one not powerful; you have brought comfort, and will leave it with me; for *gratitude is comfort.*

Oh! my memory stands all a tip-toe on one point: when it drops from it, then it perishes. Spare me; ask me nothing; let me weep before you in peace—the kindest act of greatness.

ESSEX. I should rather have dared to mount into the midst of the conflagration, than I now dare entreat thee not to weep. The tears that overflow thy heart, my Spenser, will stanch and heal it in their sacred streams, but not without hope in God.

SPENSER. My hope in God is, that I may soon see gain what he has taken from me. Amidst the myriads of angels, there is not one so beautiful: and even he, if there be any, who is appointed my guardian, could never love me so. Ah! these are idle thoughts, vain, wandering, distempered dreams. If there were ever guardian angels, he who so wanted one, my helpless boy, would not have left *these arms upon my knees.*

ESSEX. God help and sustain thee, too gentle Spenser! I never will desert thee. But what am I? Great they have called me! Alas! how powerless, then, and infantile, is greatness in the presence of calamity!

Come, give me thy hand: let us walk up and down the gallery. Bravely done! I will envy no more a Sidney or a Raleigh.

#### TABLE TALK.

—Malherbe, the French poet, was very free of his speech. The Archbishop of Rouen having desired of him, as a great favour, that he would be present at a sermon which he was to preach, had invited him to dinner. When the cloth was taken away, Malherbe fell fast asleep; and the bishop waking him to carry him to the sermon, he desired to be excused, for that he found he should have “a comfortable nap without it.”

#### POWER OBTAINED BY KINDNESS.

The exercise of positive efficient benevolence towards inferiors, brings with it increase of the power which constitutes superiority. Of two men occupying a position of equality as regards others, the man who contributes most to the happiness of those others, will infallibly become the most influential; will dispose of a greater quantity of service. He will strengthen his position by augmenting the number of his good deeds. Every benefit conferred on others will be prolific to himself. And the benefits conferred on others increase the power of others; and the increase of power in the hands of those willing to do him service, is the increase of his own power. The compound interest brought to effective benevolence by deeds of benevolence, is happily limitless; of the seeds scattered by the husbandry of virtue, few will turn out barren.—*Bentham's Deontology.*

#### PERSEVERANCE IN A FAVOURITE OBJECT.

In conducting one of his geometrical surveys, it is animating to see the fortitude and skill displayed by Delambre, the astronomer. In a letter to Lalande, written in 1797, he thus expresses himself:—“I had about six hours' work, and I could not do it in less than ten days. In the morning I mounted to the signal, which I left at sunset. The nearest inn was that at Sullers, to which it took me three hours to go, and as much to return, and the road was the worst I have met with. At last I resolved to take up my lodging in a neighbouring cow-house; I say neighbouring, because it was only at the distance of an hour's walk. During these ten days I could not take off my clothes; I slept upon hay, and lived on milk and cheese. All this time I could hardly ever get sight of the two objects at once; and during the observations, as well as in the long intervals which they left, I was alternately burned by the sun, frozen by the wind, and drenched by the rain. I passed thus ten or twelve hours every day, exposed to all the inclemency of the weather; but nothing annoyed me so much as the inaction.”—*Portrait Gallery.*

#### ANGER.

That which most tickles us in this passion is the seeming justice of it, and that it appears to excuse itself by the malice of another. We ought not, however, to entertain it; for to commit the correction of an offence to anger, were to punish vice by itself. Reason, which should govern, will admit no such officers as execute at their own license without her authority: to her, violence is improper who will (like nature) do all by the compass. She conceives that such violent motions only proceed from the imbecility of such as have them; who, like children and old men, trip and run when they think to walk.—*Du Vaix.*

#### INTERESTING DEDICATION.

To Thomas Caldecott, of the Middle Temple, Esq., who materially assisted in the completion of the present volume. This ‘Treatise on English Versification’ is affectionately dedicated by his schoolfellow in Winchester College, and *friend of seventy years standing*.—The Author, W. C., Oxford, April 5, 1827.—[The Rev. William Crowe, Public Orator of the University. A punster, who was by when this dedication was read out loud, said (but with no want of reverence) that he thought it time for a friend of so long “standing” to take a chair.]

JOSEPH WARTON AND POPE'S COUSIN.

The sex in general were partial to him; and the editor has frequently seen the young, the handsome, and the gay, deserted by the belles, to attract the notice of the Doctor: whilst he was, on his part, thoroughly accessible, and imparted his lively sallies and instructive conversation with the most gallant and appropriate pleasantry. He was a great admirer of beauty; nor was it in his nature to use a rude expression to female. He had, moreover, a great tenderness and love for children, and fully exemplified the maxim, that wherever there are a uniform tenderness to the female sex, and an indulgent notice of children, there is a warm and feeling heart. His politeness to the ladies, however, was once put to a hard test. He was invited, whilst Master of Winchester, to meet a relative of Pope, who, from her connection with the family, he was taught to believe could furnish him with much valuable and private information. Incited by all that eagerness which so strongly characterized him, he, on his introduction, sat immediately close to the lady, and, by inquiring her consanguinity to Pope, entered at once on the subject, when the following dialogue took place:—

“Pray, sir, did you not write a book about my cousin Pope?”—“Yes, madam.”—“They tell me 'twas vastly clever. He wrote a great many plays, did not he?”—“I have heard only of one attempt, madam.”—“Oh, no, I beg your pardon, that was Mr Shakespeare: I always confound them.”—This was too much even for the Doctor's gallantry: he replied “Certainly, madam;” and, with a bow, changed his seat to the contrary side of the room,

where he sat, to the amusement of a large party, with such a mingled countenance of archness and chagrin, such a struggle between his taste for the ridiculous, and his natural politeness, as could be pourtrayed but by his speaking and expressive countenance. In a few minutes he quitted the company, but not without taking his leave of the lady in the most polite and unaffected manner.—*Wool's Life of Warton.*

#### PLEASANT EXPOSTULATION OF GOETHE'S MOTHER WITH HERSELF.

Yesterday, however, I could not bear myself any longer, and so I scolded myself heartily, and said “Shame on thee, old Räthin (Counsellor), thou hast had happy days enough in the world, and thy Wolfgang to boot; and now, when the evil day comes, thou must e'en take it kindly, and not make these wry faces. What dost thou mean by being so impatient and naughty when it pleases God to lay the cross upon thee? What, then! thou wantest to walk on roses for ever? now when thou art past the time, too—past seventy!” Thus, you see, I talked to myself, and directly after my heart was lighter, and all went better, because I myself was not so naughty and disagreeable.—*Recollections of Goethe.*

#### TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON JOURNAL, ON HIS MOTTO,

(“TO ASSIST THE INQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND SYMPATHISE WITH ALL.”)

TRUE friend! thou dost indeed assist

Th' inquiring in their souls' distress;

When error wraps them like a mist

In its drear, mazy wilderness,

Then comest thou, with out-stretch'd hands and heart,  
The mist is pass'd—and world! how sweet thou art!

Kind friend! thy words no animate

The struggling, when their spirits fail;

Even though equal to our fate,

The mind will sometimes seem to quail,  
With low, pale voice thus whisp'ring in our ear,—

“How useless are thy efforts! how severe!”

Dear friend! aye thou dost sympathise  
With all who tread the common earth;

The poor, rich, ignorant or wise,

Their hopes, their sufferings, their mirth,

All find thy heart an ever-open home:

Ah! never may itself, unshelter'd, roam!

J. S.

Hull, Jan. 7, 1835.

\* \* \* Thankful as we are, personally, to the writer of these verses, readers like him (and fortunately we have many) will believe us when we say, that we publish them quite as much for the evidence they afford of the salutary effect of hopeful writing upon good hearts.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

‘Ugolino’ and the ‘Iron Mask’ shall be turned to account, as D. G. wishes.

R. H. R. (whom we are glad we please) says, in reference to our want of room for more correspondence, that we might employ a smaller type. On the other hand, we have readers (not aged ones either) who complain that our type is too small, and that they cannot read it by candle-light. What are we to do?

An inquiry has been made respecting the ‘Reflector.’ R. A., of No. 17, Aske's Hospital, Hoxton, says he has a copy of it to dispose of, in excellent condition.

We should like to publish some of the stanzas of ‘Thoughts on an Infant's Death,’—indeed all of them, for the sake of the general writing of the author. But the poem has too little of his originality, considering its length.

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